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Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of

United States Telephone Association  
Petition For Rulemaking—2000 Biennial  
Regulatory Review

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RM No. 9707

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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COMMENTS

BellSouth Corporation, on behalf of itself and its subsidiaries, ("BellSouth") hereby submits its comments on the Petition for Rulemaking submitted by the United States Telephone Association ("USTA").

On August 11, 1999, USTA submitted a petition for rulemaking<sup>1</sup> that, if granted, would commence a proceeding for the purpose of engaging in a comprehensive review of its regulations as required by Section 11 of the Communications Act as amended by the Telecommunications Act of 1996.<sup>2</sup> BellSouth was an active participant in the drafting of the petition and supports it fully.

Under Section 11, the Commission is required to review its regulations that apply to the operations and activities of any provider of telecommunications service every two years. In the course of its review, the Commission is to determine which regulations are no longer necessary as a result of meaningful economic competition between providers of such service.

<sup>1</sup> USTA submitted a similar petition on September 30, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 161.

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While the Commission initiated several individual proceedings as part of its biennial review process in 1998, the scope of these initiatives was quite narrow. As the USTA petition evidences, there are numerous opportunities to streamline and make more efficient the Commission's system of regulations that have not been taken advantage of in the biennial review proceedings. Striving to improve regulatory and administrative processes is a policy objective that advances the public interest. It spurs efficient investment, enhances competition and increases consumer welfare. In short, undertaking the comprehensive review recommended by USTA would be consistent with the pro-competitive, de-regulatory objectives of the Telecommunications Act.

Further, instituting the comprehensive review suggested by USTA is in accord with the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Congress expressly mandated that rules be reviewed every two years and that any outdated rules be eliminated. A comprehensive review proposed in the petition is the most efficient process to accomplish this goal. As USTA points out in its petition, many of the rules are interconnected in a complex way and therefore should be reviewed on a comprehensive basis and not in a piecemeal fashion as conducted by the Commission in 1998. Moreover, a comprehensive review conducted with one set of standards will insure that all rules are subject to the same scrutiny as opposed to the separate proceedings established in 1998 in which the standards in each such proceeding were unclear.<sup>3</sup>

The issue that USTA's petition puts before the Commission is whether or not to commence a rulemaking proceeding. The Commission is not being called upon to decide here the substance or the merits of USTA's proposed rules changes. Nevertheless, given the completeness of the USTA petition, the Commission is in a position to immediately grant

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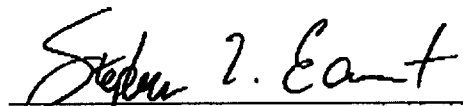
<sup>3</sup> USTA Petition at 6-7.

USTA's petition and to use the proposed rule amendments as the framework for a notice of proposed rulemaking. Accordingly, BellSouth urges the Commission to act expeditiously and begin the comprehensive review requested by the petition.

Respectfully submitted,

**BELLSOUTH CORPORATION**

By:



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Date: November 15, 1999

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I do hereby certify that I have this 15<sup>th</sup> day of November, 1999, served the following parties to this action with a copy of the foregoing **BELLSOUTH COMMENTS**, reference RM No. 9707, by hand delivery or by placing a true and correct copy of the same in the United States Mail, postage prepaid, addressed to the parties listed below.

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